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REMARKS

As per the telephone conversation of February 5, and the Office Communication of March 31, 2004, the Examiner has deemed the reply filed by the Applicants on 11/3/2004 to be not fully responsive to the previous office action for failing to comply with the requirements of 37 C.F. R. 1.821-1.825, stating that the applicants are pointing to specific amino acid positions in the claims without reference to sequence numbers. Specifically, the prior Office Action allegedly did not adequately address the Examiner's concerns with respect to providing a reference sequence for the specific mutations listed in claim 6.

In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to read:

A cytokine-binding domain of Domain 4 of a β_c chain or analogous structure of a cytokine receptor, or portion thereof, which binds to at least one cytokine and is capable of transducing a cytokine signal through a single cytokine receptor, said domain comprising a portion of the B'-C' loop of the cytokine binding domain.

Applicants respectfully note that the amendment follows the suggestion of the Examiner to amend the 1st claim of the application to recite the name of the cytokine-binding domain capable of transducing a signal of the specified group of cytokine receptors. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification at, for example, page 10, line 31-38:

The B'C' loop of domain 4 or the common β_c chain (D4 β_c) of the cytokine receptor or part thereof is involved in the cytokine binding. The B-C and preferably the F-G loops protrude significantly from the body of the protein and are implicated in cytokine binding (Figure 1A, B). It adopts a regular structure in D4 β_c having residues 365 to 368 forming a type I β -turn (Figure 1). Preferably the portion of the B'-C' loop of the domain includes Tyr 365, Ile 368 and His 367.

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The structural characteristics of the β_c chain are described in detail by the Applicants in the specification at, for example, page 9, line 1-24 and page 10, line 19-30.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the formal objections to the claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner perform a substantive examination of the application.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated: June 1, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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